This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

CAPTAIN THOMAS A. SCOTT
MASTER DIVER

F. HOPKINSON SMITH

"TRUE AMERICAN TYPES"

C
448
Sect
Smith

Harvard University

Library of the Divinity School

GIFT OF

American Unitarian
Association.
24 Dec. 1908.

CAPTAIN
THOMAS A. SCOTT
MASTER DIVER

"TRUE AMERICAN TYPES"

Vol. I. JOHN GILLEY: Maine Farmer and Fisherman, by CHARLES W. ELIOT.

Vol. II. AUGUSTUS CONANT: Illinois Pioneer and Preacher, by ROBERT COLLYER.

Vol. III. CAP'N CHADWICK: Marblehead Skipper and Shoemaker, by JOHN W. CHADWICK.

Vol. IV. DAVID LIBBEY: Penobscot Woodsman and River-driver, by FANNIE H. ECKSTORM.

Vol. V. CAPTAIN THOMAS A. SCOTT: Master Diver, by F. HOPKINSON SMITH.

Price, each, 60 cents, *net*; by mail, 65 cents.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
Publishers, Boston, Massachusetts

CAPTAIN
THOMAS A. SCOTT

MASTER DIVER

ONE WHO WAS NOT AFRAID
AND WHO SPOKE THE TRUTH

BY

F. HOPKINSON SMITH

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
1908

COPYRIGHT 1908
F. HOPKINSON SMITH

DEC 24 1908
Gift of
American Unitarian
Association
(1572)

Presswork by The University Press, Cambridge, U. S. A.

CAPTAIN

THOMAS A. SCOTT

MASTER DIVER

CAPTAIN SCOTT

SOME sixty years ago — sixty-two, to be exact — there sailed out of a harbor on the Chesapeake, near the town of Snow Hill, Maryland, a craft carrying eight cords of wood — all on deck. She was what was known as a " bay pungy," drawing but four feet of water, with a mast forward and a boom swinging loose. Aft of the stump of a bowsprit was a fo'castle the size of a dry goods box, in which slept the captain and crew.

The captain was Tommy Scott, a lad of fifteen,— strong, well-built,

and springy, with a look in his face of one who was not afraid, and who spoke the truth; the crew was a negro boy of twelve. These two supplied the neighboring towns with wood in exchange for oysters and clams.

Some years later a straight, clear-eyed young fellow, with a chest of iron — arms like cant hooks and thighs lashed with whip-cord and steel, shipped as common sailor aboard the schooner John Willetts,— Captain Wever, Master. He was seven years older than when he commanded the pungy, but the look on his face was still the same,— the look of a man who was not afraid and who spoke the truth.

A leaf torn from the log of the Willetts — yellow stained and frayed at

the corners — a fragment hidden in an old trunk in the garret all these years — furnishes a further record. From this fragment it appears that a certain Thomas Scott was hired at fifteen dollars a month, paid at intervals, as follows:

To cash at Port Richmond.....	$ 2.00
To cash at New York.....	1.00
To cash for shirt.....	1.50
To cash for trunk off Barnegat....	2.00
Cash a dollar gold piece.....	1.00

At the bottom are the words, " All settled with T. Scott up to May 1st, 1852," and then the signature, " T. A. Scott."

Three years later (1855 now), another vessel loomed into view; this was the schooner Thomas Nelson, Capt.

Thomas A. Scott master and part-owner, loaded to the scuppers with a cargo of staves bound for Barbadoes. She carried but one passenger,—a slender Maryland girl with a wedding ring on her finger which the Captain himself had placed there three weeks before. The voyage took eighteen days, the sea being smooth and the wind kindly — so kindly that the slender girl sometimes held the tiller. On the voyage back a gale from the northwest swept the deck and split the foresail into ribbons. On the tenth day the navigator and half the crew were taken down with fever, the navigator dying as he reached port. Again the slender girl held the tiller, standing beside the man who was not afraid,— this time with her heart in

her mouth: the Atlantic was an unknown sea to her husband, but the wife and all he had in the world was aboard. Forty-eight hours the two stood on deck taking turns at the pumps and tiller. On the twenty-fifth day they sighted the Capes and the next morning dropped anchor in the Roanoke. Many a storm have these two ridden out together since that blind rush from the Barbadoes — storms of poverty, of death, of sorrow — many a bright morning too, and welcoming harbor, have gladdened their eyes, but there were always four hands on the tiller, two big and strong and two warm and helping.

The children began to come now. The schooner was sold and the Cap-

tain and his wife moved to Coytesville, N. J., where he opened a general store. Two years later a burning steamer sank near Fort Lee. The Captain was asked to make a survey of the wreck, with the result that the store was abandoned and a contract entered into between himself and the owners to bring the cargo to the surface. This experience fitted him for more important work along similar lines, and in 1869 he entered the employ of a sub-marine company in New York, and was at once placed in charge of the wrecked steamer Scotland, sunk in six fathoms of water off Sandy Hook, its site marked for many years by the U. S. Government with the Scotland Lightship. The steamer was an iron vessel, lay immediately

in the channel and was a menace to navigation. The government paid a lump sum for its complete removal and a percentage of the value of any cargo saved. Up to the time Captain Scott was put in charge of this work, all attempts at breaking the iron hulk had failed; explosives of to-day were unknown then; the battery was in use, but a water-proof cartridge of high power was lacking. Captain Scott crawled over every foot of the vessel in his diving dress, made up his mind instantly what to do, bought thirty new wine casks holding sixty gallons each, filled them with powder, sunk and placed each cask himself — some under her lower deck, others back of her boilers — two in the forecastle, five behind her

engines — wherever the force would tell, connected the thirty giant bombs by rubber-coated copper wire, twisted the strands into one rope, placed his battery in a rowboat, fell back some hundred yards and made the connection. There was an upheaval, a column of water straight in the air, and the Scotland was split like a melon dashed on a sidewalk.

The fight for a clear channel being won, the work of salvage was begun. This occupied 585 working hours, Scott breaking the record at that time by remaining seven hours and forty-eight minutes under water. The Company's share of the property saved amounted to $110,000; Scott's pay and percentage to $11,000.

The following year (1870) he laid

the under-water foundation for the first dock built by the Dock Department of New York, the plan being a novel one, and his own.

Between 1871 and 1878 he was in charge, at my request, of the submarine work of the Race Rock Lighthouse off New London Harbor, to which city he moved his plant and family, and where they still reside.

Not much of a record, the foregoing — unless you knew the man and were familiar with the difficulties overcome. Hundreds of men in similar walks of life have done as much, you might say many have done more; I admit it, but few with so little book education. For there had been no time during all these years for study;

he had had practically no schooling — only what his mother had taught him and what he could thumb from the primers of the day — just a plain, American sailor-man — born of industrious, honest people. His only capital, his courage, his clear head, his willingness to tackle any job that came his way, and his mastery of details.

My own acquaintance with him begins now,— one of the greatest blessings that ever came into my life. This is easily understood when my own unfitness for a task of the magnitude I had contracted to do is considered. I was young, inexperienced, with little money and with practically no plant for a work of the kind. The problem was the building of a lighthouse exposed to the full rake of the

Atlantic, situated eight miles from a harbor, two miles from any shore, my first work of any magnitude, and in a " race " that ran six miles an hour. The success of work of this kind does not always depend on the skill of the engineer, but upon the nerve, pluck and loyalty of the men who handle the material. These men are difficult to obtain, for there are no regular working gangs from which to choose them, there not being enough lighthouses built in any one year on our coasts to educate and retain them. Moreover, every structure presents a different problem in itself. Besides experience in any branch such as diving, handling and erecting derricks is really less important than the willingness to get wet and stay wet, hours at

a time; to endanger one's life almost daily without caring or knowing the risk; to go hungry when shut off from supplies by rough weather, during which no landing can be made; to sleep in a water cask for three days, if you will, lashed to the derricks, because every other movable thing,— shanty and all,— has been swept away by a southeaster (and this was one of our experiences). To do this cheerfully, patiently and continuously, year after year, battling with the sea as an enemy, only looking forward to victory, is what crowns any submarine work with success.

More difficult still is the finding of a man to lead and command such men.

One morning, in answer to my advertisement, a forceful, straightfor-

ward man,— strong as a bull, clear-eyed, honest looking, competent and fearless, walked into my office, a stranger, and thirty minutes later walked out again as foreman of construction. He was about forty-two years of age at the time, in the prime of his manhood and at the beginning of an experience now so widely known. References usually considered necessary in a first interview, and generally confirmed by subsequent inquiries or written recommendations, did not enter into the negotiations between us. No man or child could look Captain Thomas A. Scott in the face without instantly believing in him, and no act of his in after life would shake that belief.

The reader must forgive the use

of the personal pronoun in this part of the Captain's life. I cannot tell it in any other way and do him justice. This will be the better appreciated when it is remembered that during the seven years the Lighthouse was building, we slept side by side in the same shanty, ate the same food and were often wet by the smash of the same sea, and that during that time and for years thereafter, he was the brains and force of all subsequent work contracted for in my office. Our friendship began gradually, step by step, increasing in intensity as I watched him develop, noted his instantaneous command of resources, his indomitable courage, knowing no fear, and his marvelous control over his men. The sentiment deepened into love,— the love

a younger brother has for an older one, whom he looks up to and depends upon as one difficulty after another, insurmountable to me, arose, and it became permanent and life-long when his first great calamity overtook him — the blowing up of his own working boat, the Wallace, she proving a total wreck with heavy loss in killed and wounded, and a heavy money loss to him of some $10,000.

The hands that could wrench a sea-jammed rock from its bed in thirty feet of water were those of a woman now as he sat night after night in the improvised hospital we had fitted up for the men's comfort, or stood by their graves with uncovered head.

Nor can this story be properly and

truthfully told without a slight description of the work his heroism and brains brought to completion. The problem presented was the throwing overboard of thousands of tons of stone from sloops, to form an artificial island upon which, when leveled to low water, there was to be built a granite cone some sixty feet in diameter, and on this was to be placed the dwelling house, topped by the lantern and lens.

This turtle island,— it was in the form of an ellipse,— was to be leveled so smooth that the first course of masonry could be laid true. This was exceedingly difficult for the rocks over this area weighed from three to seven tons, and were, of course, jagged, with their points projecting sometimes

several feet above the requisite level of mean low water, and so covered with sea-slime and kelp as to make a slippery foothold. The current of the race, too, was swift,— so much so that, should the men pull away from the island in small boats far enough to escape the falling fragments of a blast to break these projections, they could not regain the island again except in slack water. As a protection against these fragments Captain Scott made trap doors of heavy oak plank spliced together three or four feet square. The men crouched up to their necks in water between the rocks before the blasts were fired, and pulled these skids, or trap doors, over their heads. Owing to Scott's watchfulness no skulls were cracked nor

bones broken, and a general thanksgiving took place in consequence.

At this stage of the work an important discovery was made; in fact we had been making it ever since work began. Many of the loose rocks forming the artificial island and which, in obedience to the Government's plan, had been thrown into the sea to find their own bottom, were found to have altered their position. Soundings showed that the depth of water outside the edge of the island, instead of being but twelve feet, as shown on the plan, was really thirty feet. We were, therefore, building the island on a pyramid, and not on a level surface. These facts, of course, were known and thoroughly discussed by the Government, and were as fully

known to us. But the department had decided to try the experiment of their not settling, rather than incur the additional expense of leveling the whole shoal. The impossibility of placing a granite cone weighing thousands of tons on such a foundation now became apparent. The Government was notified, and after some weeks of investigation, we were asked for a modified plan which would utilize, as far as possible, the work already completed and paid for.

I recall now the days and nights Captain Scott spent over this new problem and the number of models made and abandoned by us as new difficulties and obstacles presented themselves. At last a plan, upon which the lighthouse was finally built,

was submitted to the board and approved. It was as follows: —

To chain and drag from the center of the turtle's back by means of heavy derricks erected in a square on four points of the island, all the three to five ton rock that had been dumped in, to replace these rocks outside the circle of the proposed excavation, piling them up as a breakwater until we had reached the original bottom and had uncovered the original Race Rock, a huge boulder weighing some twenty tons, and then to fill this water space with concrete in the form of a great disk up to the level of low water. Upon this concrete disk, in reality one solid stone — the shape of a huge cheese — was to be built the granite cone.

I recall, too, the months of labor devoted to the chaining and dragging from its bed these submerged rocks, jammed together as they were by succeeding winter's storms,— the work becoming more and more difficult as the water deepened. Problems like these are outside a manual; the time must come when a human body and a pair of human hands, backed by courage and brains, must take sea after sea upon his back when working above water, or while breathing through an inch hose when grappling them below the wave break. No money can pay for such labor;— nothing but loyalty to the work and his associates.

With the water space cleared, the iron bands to circle the concrete were sunk and laid flat on the sandy bot-

tom, filled with concrete mixed in a soft state, packed into buckets with drop bottoms and thus lowered to the divers below. This was continued until four successive circles of filled iron bands, one on top of the other, — a process occupying months — were laid and the disk struck smooth. The first base stone of the lighthouse, — a mill-stone sixty feet in diameter and three feet thick, hard as an obelisk, and like it of one solid stone,— was now complete.

No other problem confronted us. The succeeding years of work were like those always attending work of this class; there were storms, of course, with high surf, so that the Rock could not be reached and there were set backs of one kind or another,

such as loss of shanties, platforms and every movable fixture. But the Captain's work was over, and one of the lasting monuments of his skill and loyalty complete in all its details.

A digression here is permissible — one that is illuminating. It is but a few years back since this same old sea-dog — he was gray by this time, with a bald spot on the back of his head and a trifle larger around the middle — boarded his tug in East London harbor — he owned half a dozen of them then — took the younger brother with him and pointed the tug's nose for the Race Rock light, finished twenty-five years before.

"Good many holes out here," the sea-dog said, as he plunged her nose head-foremost into the recurrent

waves surging in from Montauk, "and it git worse before it gits better."

As we neared the isolated pile of masonry, a spot in the waste of waters that all these years had withstood the attacks of the merciless sea, and still holds its light aloft — the figure of a man slid down the iron ladder of the cone and ran to the end of the wharf. Then came a voice.

"Anything the matter? Anybody sick?"

It was something out of the ordinary for a New London tug to head for the Rock in the teeth of a southeaster.

"No,— just come out to see if we could land," the Captain cried.

"Gosh! — how you skeered me,—

thought some of the folks was tuk bad."

Then another man dropped down the ladder and springing to the boat's davits, began lowering a lifeboat.

"What d'yer think, sir, shall we try it?" asked the Captain.

"Can we land?" I asked dubiously.

"Land! — of course," he replied with positive emphasis. "It won't make no difference to me" (he was seventy-four then),—"but there won't be a dry rag on you."

I picked up the glass and looked over the joints of the masonry and followed the lines of the wharf and the angle of the cone. They were still as true as when Captain Tom had laid them with his own hands.

"Never mind, Captain," I said — "I guess you needn't bother."

What a difference twenty-five years makes in some of us!

And it was not only in the building of the light that his indomitable courage showed itself. The human side of the man — the woman side of him, the side in which his tender nature showed itself — was even more lovable. Lovable is the word. You admire some men, you respect and fear others. Scott you loved.

What I am about to relate is not fiction. I stood by and saw it all,— it is true, word for word. There are half a dozen men yet alive who held their breath, as I did, in fear.

They have never forgotten what they saw,— and never will.

"Hung on like a terrier to a rat!" one old salt told me last winter in speaking of the event. "Seemed to shake 'er too, same's if he had his teeth in 'er. Gosh! — but I was skeered till I saw him come up an' get his wind after that big sea hit him! Beat all what Captain Tom would do in them days!"

It all occurred years before; when the old salt now bent and grizzled was as hale and hearty as Captain Scott himself.

We were at the time, the old salt included, watching the movements of a sloop loaded with stone for the Light,— the property of an old man

and his wife who could ill afford its loss. Owing to the bad seamanship of her captain, a man by the name of Baxter, the sloop had slipped her moorings from a safety buoy anchored within a hundred yards of the Rock, had been sucked in by the eddy of the Race, and with sail up was plunging bow on toward the lighthouse foundation. The error meant the sinking of the sloop and perhaps the drowning of some of her crew. It meant too hopeless poverty for the old man and his wife.

The weather had puzzled some of us since sunrise; little lumpy clouds showed near the horizon line and sailing above these was a dirt spot of vapor, while aloft glowed some prismatic sun-dogs, shimmering like opals.

Etched against the distance, with a tether line fastened to the safety buoy, lay Baxter's sloop; her sails furled, her boom swinging loose and ready, the smoke from her hoister curling from the end of her smoke-pipe thrust up out of the forward hatch.

Below us on the concrete platform rested our big air-pump, and beside it stood Captain Scott. He was in his diving dress, and at the moment was adjusting the breast-plates of lead weighing twenty-five pounds each, to his chest and back. His leaden shoes were already on his feet. With the exception of his copper helmet, the signal line around his wrist and the life-line about his waist he was ready to go below.

This meant that pretty soon he

would don his helmet, and with a last word to his tender, would tuck his chin whisker inside the opening, wait until the face plate was screwed on, and then with a nod behind the glass, denoting that the air was coming all right, would step down his rude ladder into the sea: to his place among the crabs and the sea-weed.

Suddenly my ears became conscious of a conversation carried on in a low tone around the corner of the shanty.

"Old Moon-face (Baxter) 'll have to git up and git in a minute," said a derrick-man to a shoveler — born sailors these —"there'll be a hell-uver a time 'round here 'fore night."

"Well, there ain't no wind."

"Ain't no wind,— ain't there! See that bobble waltzing in?" Sea-

ward ran a ragged line of silver, edging the horizon towards Montauk.

"Does look soapy, don't it?" answered the shoveler. "Wonder if the Cap'n sees it."

The Captain had seen it — fifteen minutes ahead of anybody else — had been watching it to the exclusion of any other object. That was why he hadn't screwed on his face-plate. He knew the sea — knew every move of the merciless, cunning beast. The game here would be to lift the sloop on the back of a smooth under-roller and with mighty lunge hurl it like a battering ram against the shore rocks, shattering its timbers into kindling wood.

The Captain called to one of his men — another shoveler.

"Billy, go down to the edge of the stone pile and holler to the sloop to cast off and make for home. And say —" this to his pump tender — "unhook this breast-plate; there won't be no divin' to-day. I've been mistrustin' the wind would haul ever since I got up this mornin'."

The shoveler sprang from the platform and began clambering over the slippery, slimy rocks like a crab, his red shirt marked with the white X of his suspenders in relief against the blue water. When he reached the outermost edge of the stone pile, where the ten-ton blocks lay, he made a megaphone of his fingers and repeated the Captain's orders to the sloop.

Baxter listened with his hands cupped to his ears.

"Who says so?" came back the reply.

"Cap'n Scott."

"What fur?"

"Goin' to blow — don't ye see it?"

Baxter stepped gingerly along the sloop's rail; when he reached the foot of the bowsprit this answer came over the water:

"Let her blow! This sloop's chartered to deliver this stone. We've got steam up and the stuff's going over the side: git your divers ready. I ain't shovin' no baby carriage and don't you forgit it. I'm comin' on! Cast off that buoy-line, you —" this to one of his men.

Captain Scott continued stripping off his leaden breast-plate. He had heard his order repeated and knew that it had been given correctly,—and the subsequent proceedings did not interest him. If Baxter had anything to say in answer it was of no moment to him. His word was law on the Ledge; first, because the men daily trusted their lives to his guidance, and second, because they all loved him with a love hard for a landsman to understand, especially to-day, when the boss and the gang never, by any possibility, pull together.

"Baxter says he's comin' on, sir," said the shoveler when he reached the Captain's side, the grin on his sunburnt face widening until its two ends hooked over his ears. The shoveler

had heard nothing so funny for weeks.

"Comin' on!"

"That's what he hollered. Wants you to git ready to take his stuff, sir."

I was out of the shanty now. I came in two jumps. With that squall whirling in from the eastward and the tide making flood, any man who would leave the protection of the spar-buoy for the purpose of unloading was fit for a lunatic asylum.

The Captain had straightened up and was screening his eyes with his hand when I reached his side, his gaze riveted on the sloop, which had now hauled in her tether line, and was now drifting clear of the buoy. He was still incredulous.

"No,— he ain't comin'. Baxter's

all right,— he'll port his helm in a minute,— but he'd better send up his jib —" and he swept his eye around, —" and that quick, too."

At that instant the sloop wavered and lurched heavily. The outer edge of the inn-suck had caught her bow.

Minds work quickly in times of great danger,— minds like Captain Scott's. In a flash he had taken in the fast approaching roller, froth-capped by the sudden squall; the surging vessel and the scared face of Baxter who, having now realized his mistake, was clutching wildly at the tiller and shouting orders to his men, none of which could be carried out. The Captain knew what would happen — what had happened before, and what would happen again with fools like

Baxter — now — in a minute — before he could reach the edge of the stone pile, hampered as he was in a rubber suit that bound his arms and tied his great legs together. And he understood the sea's game, and that the only way to outwit it would be to use the beast's own tactics. When it gathered itself for the thrust and started in to hurl the doomed vessel the full length of its mighty arms, the sloop's safety lay in widening the space. A cushion of backwater would then receive the sloop's forefoot in place of the snarling teeth of the low crunching rocks.

He had kicked off both leaden-soled shoes now and was shouting out directions to Baxter, who was slowly and surely being sucked into the swirl:

"Up with your jib! No,— *No!* — let that mainsail alone! UP! Do ye want to git her on the stone pile you — Port your helm! PORT!! GOD! — LOOK AT HIM!!"

Captain Scott had slid from the platform now and was flopping his great body over the slimy, slippery rocks like a seal, falling into water holes every other step, crawling out on his belly, rolling from one slanting stone to another, shouting to his men every time he had the breath: —

"Man that yawl and run a line as quick as God'll let ye, out to the buoy! Do ye hear! Pull that fall off the drum of the h'ister and git the end of a line on it! She'll be on top of us

in a minute, and the mast out of her! QUICK!!"

The shoveler sprang for a coil of rope. The others threw themselves after him, while half a dozen men working around the small eddy in the lea of the diminutive island caught up the oars to man the yawl.

All this time the sloop, under the up-lift of the first big Montauk roller — the skirmish line of the attack — surged bow on to destruction. Baxter, although shaking with fear, had sense enough left to keep her nose pointed to the stone pile. The mast might come out of her, but that was better than being gashed amidships and sunk in thirty fathoms of water.

The Captain, his rubber suit glisten-

ing like a tumbling porpoise, his hair matted to his head, had now reached the outermost rock opposite the doomed craft, and stood near enough to catch every expression that crossed Baxter's face, who, as white as chalk, was holding the tiller with all his strength, cap off, his blowsy hair flying in the increasing gale, his mouth tight shut — no orders now would have done any good. Go ashore she must and would, and nothing could help her. It would be every man for himself then: no help would come,— no help *could* come. Captain Scott and his men would run for shelter as soon as the blow fell and leave them to their fate. Pea-nut men like Baxter are built to think that way.

All these minutes — seconds really

— the Captain stood bending forward, watching where the sloop would strike, his hands out-stretched in the attitude of a ball player awaiting a ball. If her nose should hit on the sharp, square edges of one of the ten-ton blocks, God help her! She would split wide open, like a gourd. If by any chance her fore-foot should be thrust into one of the many gaps between the enrockment blocks — spaces from two to three feet wide — and her bow timbers thus take the shock, there was a living chance to save her.

A cry from Baxter, who had dropped the tiller and was scrambling over the stone-covered deck to the bowsprit, now reached the Captain's ears, but he never altered his posi-

tion. What he was to do must be done surely. Baxter didn't count — wasn't in the back of his head; there were plenty of willing hands to pick Baxter and his men out of the suds.

Then a thing happened, which, if I had not seen it, I would never have believed possible. The water cushion of the out-suck helped — so did the huge roller which in its blind rage had under-estimated the distance between its lift and the wide-open jaws of the rock — as a maddened bull often under-estimates the length of its thrust, its horns falling short of the matador.

Whatever the cause, Captain Scott saw his chance, sprung to the outermost rock, and bracing his great snubbing posts of legs against its edge, reversed his body, caught the wavering

sloop on his broad shoulders, close under her bow-sprit chains, and pushed with all his might.

Now began a struggle between the strength of the man and the lunge of the sea. With every succeeding onslaught, and before the savage roller could fully lift the staggering craft to hurl her to destruction, Captain Tom, with the help of the out-suck, would shove her back from the waiting rocks. This was repeated again and again,—the men in the rescuing yawl meanwhile bending every muscle to carry out the Captain's commands. Sometimes his head was free enough to shout his orders, and sometimes both man and bow were smothered in suds.

"Keep that fall clear!" would come the order—"Stand ready to catch the

yawl! Shut that —" here a souse would stop his breath. "Shut that furnace door! Do ye want the steam out of the b'iler —" etc., etc.

That the slightest misstep on the slimy rocks on which his feet were braced meant sending him under the sloop's bow where he would be caught between her "fore-foot" and the rocks and ground into pulp concerned him as little as did the fact that Baxter and his men had crawled along the bowsprit over his head and dropped to the island without wetting their shoes, or that his diving suit was full of water and he soaked to the skin. Little things like these made no more difference to him than they would have done to a Newfoundland dog saving a child. His thoughts were on other

things — on the rescuing yawl speeding towards the spar buoy, on the stout hands and knowing ones who were pulling for all they were worth to that anchor of safety, on two of his own men who, seeing Baxter's cowardly desertion, had sprung like cats at the bowsprit of the sloop in one of her dives, and were then on the stern ready to pay out a line to the yawl. No,— he'd hold on "till hell froze over."

A hawser now ripped suddenly from out the crest of a roller. The two cats, despite the increasing gale, had succeeded in paying out a stern line to the men in the yawl; who in turn had slipped it through the snatch block fastened in the spar buoy, and had then connected it with the line they had

brought with them from the island, its far end being around the drum of our hoister.

A shrill cry now came from one of the crew in the yawl alongside the spar buoy, followed instantly by the clear, ringing order —"GO AHEAD!"

A burst of feathery steam plumed skyward, and then the slow chuggity-chug of the shore drum cogs rose in the air. The stern lines straightened until it was as rigid as a bar of iron — sagged for an instant under the slump of the staggering sloop, straightened, and then slowly, foot by foot, the sloop, held by the stern line, crept back to safety.

And this to save a friend and his old wife from loss and, perhaps, poverty!

This love for his fellow men and willingness to risk his life for their safety was not confined to his experience on the Rock. He never referred to any of these deeds thereafter; — never believed really that he had done anything out of the ordinary. I myself had been with him for two years before I learned of the particular act of heroism which I am now about to relate — and only then from one of his men — an act which was the talk of the country for days, and the subject of many of the illustrations of the time. I give it as it was told me, and word for word as I have given it before. I do so the more willingly and without excuse for its repetition here because it not only illustrates the courageous but the tender, human side

of the man. I give it gladly, because the reading and rereading of such deeds helps to keep alive in the hearts of our people that reverence for heroism which of late seems to be on the wane among us. Our so-called up-to-date literature is responsible for some of it; the absorption of our people in the material things of life for much of it. Our heroes of to-day are often the targets of the morrow. The thrill that sent the blood of our young men rushing through their veins when the oft told story of Valley Forge, Bunker Hill, or Gettysburg was poured into their ears, is nothing to the breathless interest with which many of them read the head lines of a newspaper that tell of ruined homes, wrecked reputations, and

the misery and suffering involved. Now and then, it is true, when some brave fireman crawls along a burning ledge, or the gateman on a ferry-boat risks his life to save a would-be suicide, with the result that some official pins a medal on his chest, the heroic act wins a place, but the record rarely covers more than ten lines of the issue, and even then with the most important facts left out.

Of this incident it can be safely said that nothing has been left out. Best of all — it has been confirmed in all its details by the hero himself, after a corkscrewing on my part that lasted for hours.

But to the story:

One morning in January, when the ice in the Hudson River ran unusually

heavy, a Hoboken ferry-boat slowly crunched her way through the floating floes, until the thickness of the pack choked her paddles in mid-river. The weather had been bitterly cold for weeks, and the keen northwest wind had blown the great fields of floating ice into a hard pack along the New York Shore. It was an early morning trip, and the decks were crowded with laboring men and the driveways choked with teams; the women and the children standing inside the cabins, a solid mass up to the swinging doors. While she was gathering strength for a further effort an ocean tug sheered to avoid her, veered a point, and crashed into her side, cutting her below the water-line in a great V-shaped gash. The next

instant a shriek went up from hundreds of throats. Women, with blanched faces, caught terror-stricken children in their arms, while men, crazed with fear, scaled the rails and upper decks to escape the plunging of the overthrown horses. A moment more, and the disabled boat careened from the shock and fell over on her beam helpless. Into the V-shaped gash the water poured a torrent. It seemed but a question of minutes before she would lunge headlong below the ice.

Within two hundred yards of both boats, and free of the heaviest ice, steamed the wrecking tug Reliance of the Off-shore Wrecking Company, making her way cautiously up the New Jersey shore to coal at Wee-

hawken. On her deck forward, sighting the heavy cakes, and calling out cautionary orders to the mate in the pilot-house, stood Captain Scott. When the ocean tug reversed her engines after the collision and backed clear of the shattered wheel-house of the ferry-boat, he sprang forward, stooped down, ran his eye along the water-line, noted in a flash every shattered plank, climbed into the pilot-house of his own boat, and before the astonished pilot could catch his breath ran the nose of the Reliance along the rail of the ferry-boat and dropped upon the latter's deck like a cat.

If he had fallen from a passing cloud the effect could not have been more startling. Men crowded about him and caught his hands. Women

sank on their knees and hugged their children, and a sudden peace and stillness possessed every soul on board. Tearing a life-preserver from the man nearest him and throwing it overboard, he backed the coward ahead of him through the swaying mob, ordering the people to stand clear, and forcing the whole mass to the starboard side. The increased weight gradually righted the stricken boat until she regained a nearly even keel.

With a threat to throw overboard any man who stirred, he dropped into the engine-room, met the engineer halfway up the ladder, compelled him to return, dragged the mattresses from the crew's bunks, stripped off blankets, racks of clothes, overalls,

cotton waste and rags of carpet, cramming them into the great rent left by the tug's cutwater, until the space of each broken plank was replaced, except one. Through and over this space the water still combed, deluging the floors and swashing down between the gratings into the hold below.

"Another mattress," he cried, "quick! All gone? — A blanket then — carpet — anything — five minutes more and she'll right herself. Quick, for God's sake!"

It was useless. Everything, even to the oil rags, had been used.

"Your coat, then. Think of the babies, man; — do you hear them?"

Coats and vests were off in an instant; the engineer on his knees bracing the shattered planking, Captain

Scott forcing the garments into the splintered openings.

It was useless. Little by little the water gained, bursting out first below, then on one side, only to be recaulked, and only to rush in again.

Captain Scott stood a moment as if undecided, ran his eye searchingly over the engine-room, saw that for his needs it was empty, then deliberately tore down the top wall of caulking he had so carefuly built up, and, before the engineer could protest, had forced his own body into the gap with his arm outside level with the drifting ice.

An hour later the disabled ferry-boat, with every soul on board, was towed into the Hoboken slip.

When they lifted the Captain from

the wreck he was unconscious and barely alive. The water had frozen his blood, and the floating ice had torn the flesh from his protruding arm from shoulder to wrist. When the color began to creep back to his cheeks, he opened his eyes, and said to the doctor who was winding the bandages:—

"Wuz any of them babies hurt?"

A month passed before he regained his strength, and another week before the arm had healed so that he could get his coat on. Then he went back to his work on board the Reliance.

In the meantime the Wrecking Company had presented a bill to the ferry company for salvage, claiming that the safety of the ferry-boat was

due to one of the employees of the Wrecking Company. Payment had been refused, resulting in legal proceedings, which had already begun. The morning following this action Captain Scott was called into the president's office.

" Captain," said the official, " we're going to have some trouble getting our pay for that ferry job. Here's an affidavit for you to swear to."

The Captain took the paper to the window and read it through without a comment, then laid it back on the president's desk, picked up his hat and moved to the door.

" Did you sign it? "

" No; and I ain't a-goin' to."

" Why? "

" 'Cause I ain't so durned mean as

you be. Look at this arm. Do you think I'd got into that hell-hole if it hadn't been for them women cryin' and the babies a-hollerin'? And you want 'em to pay for it. Damn ye! If your head wasn't white I'd mash it."

Then he walked out, cursing like a pirate; the next day he answered my advertisement and the following week took charge of the work at Race Rock.

Another hour of corkscrewing made him remember the log of the Reliance, locked up in that same old trunk in the garret from which the log of the Willetts was taken after his death. When the old well-thumbed book was found, he perched his glasses on his nose, and began turning the leaves

with his rough thole-pin of a finger, stopping at every page to remoisten it, and adding a running commentary of his own over the long-forgotten records.

"Yes,— here it is," he said at last. "Knowed I hadn't forgot it. You can read it yourself; my eyes ain't so good as they wuz."

It read as follows:—

"January 30, 1870. Left Jersey City 7 a. m. Ice running heavy. Captain Scott stopped leak in ferry-boat."

But to continue:

The ending of the work on the Rock found him a little over fifty years of age but still strong, muscular

and with an experience in submarine work second to no man on our coast. Soon the docks in front of his home on Pequot Avenue, New London, began to be enlarged: sheds were built, new tugs bought and equipped, dredging machines constructed and heavy scows, barges and lighters carrying cargoes of two hundred tons or more, were equipped with the best modern machinery. He was ready now for any heavy work, no matter how large the steamer, how dangerous her position, or how serious the problem of refloating her. The telephone was within reach of his bedside, and no matter what the hour or how hard a gale was blowing, he was out and aboard his fastest tug, often with a quart of raw oil dashed into the fur-

nace and everything wide open. It will be just as well to follow some of these experiences: — The steamer Columbia, for instance, wrecked off Gay Head — this in 1884.

The wreck lay three-quarters of a mile from the promontory and the sea broke violently over it. Around the wreck were the steamers Storm King, Conkling, Vincent, Hunter and Hunt, the latter having on board Captain Townsend, the New Bedford diver, who was there in the interests of the Boston Underwriters. Captain Baker, of the Baker Wrecking Company of Boston, was also there, waiting more favorable conditions to go below. Captain Scott recognized Captain Baker as having charge of the wreck, and the latter said after a

cursory survey that in his opinion a diver could not stay under water in such weather, and that he would not send a man down. The New London diver characteristically replied that he would send no man down either, but would go himself. It was then resolved that an attempt should be made about 3 p.m. if possible. Captain Scott kept by the wreck, noting the condition of the water closely and made up his mind that if he waited Captain Baker's return he would lose the best chance for going under. He therefore began his preparations at 1 p.m. and shortly before 2 o'clock dropped over the starboard side and made a thorough examination. He found a hole three feet square forward about twenty feet from the stem

and several smaller holes forward and abaft; also a perpendicular crack near the foremast, while on the bottom were fragments of jagged rock evidently broken from the larger boulders on which the ship struck. After completing the survey of the starboard side along the bottom, Captain Scott came up and made an attempt to examine the deck. He went under at the forward hatch where he found the deck uninjured, but he had no time to do more when he was caught in the crest of an immense breaker and hurled feet foremost into the air. The heavy seas breaking over the vessel prevented any further work that day.

On Friday morning Captain Scott went out to the wreck in the Alert, but

found a stiff breeze blowing and the water too rough to admit of resuming operations. The Alert, however, picked up three cases of boots and shoes, a portion of the cargo of the City of Columbus, near Wood's Holl.

On Saturday the wind blew fresh from the northwest, but the sea was moderate, the weather clear, and Captain Scott was able to remain two hours under water and to complete his survey. He went down well aft on the port side and examined along the bottom; he found portions of the smokestack and machinery, lines, sails and other wreckage strewed along the port quarter by the main rigging. There was no material injury to the hull aft of the boilers near the bottom, but there were numerous cracks

and several holes forward. Further towards the bow the extent of the damage increased, the hull being cracked and pierced with holes innumerable. The diver then went ahead of the wreck forty or fifty feet and found himself in a submarine channel or sluiceway, making it evident that the vessel struck a considerable distance ahead of her present position, and kept dropping back by the influence of gravitation and the action of the tide, leaving the imprint of her keel on the sandy bottom.

And again on January 12, 1890, when the magnificent passenger steamer City of Worcester went ashore on the rocks inside Bartlett's Reef Lightship. Within an hour of the receipt of the news of the disaster, Captain

Scott was speeding to her assistance in his tug T. A. Scott, Jr., and was soon alongside the big, helpless steamer. The officers reported that the Worcester was fast on the rocks with the water pouring into her second, third and fourth compartments and her fires out. Life preservers were distributed, the boats made ready, passengers landed without a single accident; most of the cargo — 1,250 bales of cotton being part — was transferred to lighters. Twenty-four hours thereafter the endangered steamer was hauled from the rocks, towed into New London harbor, and anchored within a stone's throw of Captain Scott's residence.

This list could be continued indefinitely. Hardly a day or a night

was the crew idle, and is not now, for his sons and associates still carry on the business. Sometimes a diversion in the customary work of recovering sunken property would occur. It was a locomotive on one occasion; she had attempted to cross a trestle and had toppled over in thirty feet of water, bottomed by mud.

"Get her up?—" rejoined Captain Scott,—"certainly; — where'll I put her?"

"Back on the rails," said the general manager, with a laugh at the impossibility of the task.

"All right,— she'll be there in the mornin'—" and she was.

It was but the work of half a day for Captain Scott to rig up a pair of sheer poles, drop beside her in his

diving dress, pass some heavy chains under the boiler and between her axles, hook a block into a ring, take a turn on a hoisting engine aboard his wrecking tug, open a steam cylinder and up she came. To lower her gently to the rails and wash her clean of the mud with a nozzle attached to the hose of his steam pump was the last service.

"There —" he said when she was scrubbed clean —"now git a fire under her and pull her out; — she's in my way."

These instances, as I have said, can be multiplied indefinitely,— enough, however, has been told to show the fundamental incentive of his character — his determination to do his

work right,— so right that no man need ever perfect it after him. His superb constitution helped, but his indomitable will helped more.

He never drank nor smoked, and he neither had time nor desire to play cards. He would go for forty-eight hours in wet clothes and think nothing of sleeping in them. He absolutely did not know what fear was for himself, yet he feared for his men. He would never send a man where he would not go himself, yet he'd go where he wouldn't send the men. He never swore except in times of danger, and then the oaths that came from his deep chest meant something "I've got to do it," he'd say to me. "They won't listen if I don't." So he'd swear at the men to

get out of the way of danger, to keep out of this place or that, to let him go down instead of one of them. The result was that they obeyed him implicitly. If he said "Don't go!" they didn't. If he said "Go!" they went, though it might be into a boiling surf or apparent death. They trusted his judgment in the face of everything; and they were never deceived. When a piece of work involved an extra hazardous risk he would say, "No that ain't no place for you. I'll go."

And the harder the job, and the more hopeless it seemed, the more cheerily he rose to the emergency, taking full command and invariably doing the critical part himself. When mounting our system of derricks for

Race Rock, the crucial cable was the outboard stay for the fourth derrick mast. At the end of the stay was a hook, and this hook had to be slipped into a ring which was made fast to a great block of stone out in the surf. When it came time to windlass the last mast into position and adjust this hook, of course somebody had to go into the surf to do it. The sea was rising fast under a southeast wind, which always kicks up trouble at Race Rock, and it demanded a man of great strength. So, of course, the Captain went himself. Up to his waist in a boiling surf, buried under the incoming rollers, he hung on to that hook like grim death, swearing between mouthfuls of salt water to the men on the rocks, and in spite of every

effort of wind and tide to thwart us, he got the hook into the ring and completed the derrick system that made possible the building of the Race Rock Light.

In fact, just here lay his unique value. Whenever a situation confronted us — one that the engineers in their offices could not solve, a situation where theories and precedent counted for nothing and the only solution lay in the workman himself, the Captain was the man who rose to the emergency. For he could in any situation unite his great strength and manual skill to his keen wits and inventive genius. Engineering feats that would have been given up as hopeless he made possible by combining his brain with his muscle. He

thought like lightening too. Time and again I have seen him rescue his men when it didn't seem possible that they could be saved. And the smallest job received just as much attention and disinterested devotion from him as the largest; nothing was ever shirked.

During the later years of his life when he grew too stout to be in daily active service (he weighed over three hundred pounds a few months before he died) the pent-up energy of the man seemed to have found its outlet in the help he gave others. His charity was so extensive, and he was so much beloved by every one, that at his funeral there were six hundred people gathered in and about the house. Until the very day of his

death he was busy distributing bounties, sending children to school, looking after poor families up and down the coast. One of the New London papers remarked that it was hard to see how New London was going to live without Captain Scott. Only three days before his death he ordered a ton of coal sent to a woman who scrubbed the floors of his house, and nearly his last act was to call up the coal dealer on the telephone and upbraid him for delivering a cheaper grade than he ordered, demanding that he take it out of the bin and substitute the better.

On the night of February 17th, 1907, when he had reached his seventy-seven years, the end came in

the fine new home he had built next his old cottage. It had been a short time before that he had taken that same slender hand in his — the one that had helped hold the tiller on their wedding journey — and the two crossed the intervening lawn together. All the sons and daughters and grandchildren were awaiting them in the spacious hall and adjoining rooms.

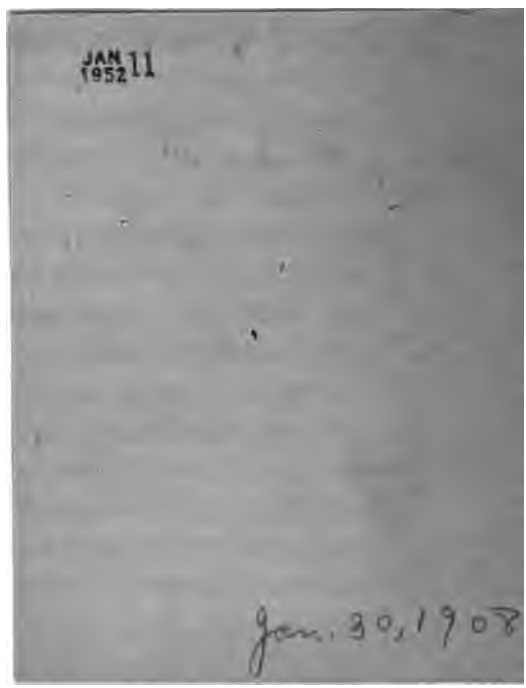
When the two dear old people entered the house Captain Scott turned to his wife and said in that vibrant voice of his which all who loved him knew so well:

"This is all yours, Mrs. Scott. I guess our troubles are all over now," and he dropped into a chair and cried like a child.

Summing him up in the thirty-seven years I knew and loved him, he has always been, and will always be, to those who had his confidence, one of nature's noblemen.— Brave modest, capable and tender-hearted. The record of his life, imperfectly as I have given it, must be of value to his fellow countrymen. Nor can I think of any higher tribute to pay him than to repeat the refrain with which these pages were opened: —

"One who was not afraid, and who spoke the truth!"

3 2044 029 915 2



3 2044 029 915 29

3 2044 029 915 29